

New Jersey

Language Arts Literacy

Curriculum Framework



Chapter 5

Activities for Language Arts Literacy



ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Each of the New Jersey language arts literacy standards is elaborated by a set of progress indicators that identify specifically what students should know and be able to do as they work towards achieving that standard by the end of grades 4, 8, and 12. The activities on the following pages illustrate ways in which teachers guide students toward that proficiency. These activities represent a spectrum of instructional approaches that target a diverse student population and that show a continuum of learning from grades K through 12. Activity clusters for each indicator reflect a spiraling of experiences designed to build upon developmental differences.

The description for each activity assumes that the teacher has already presented the literacy skills necessary for success with the activity through structured lessons that provide direct instruction, modeling, and guided feedback. The descriptions also assume that teachers will use these activities as a means for observing student proficiency, identifying additional instructional needs, and extending student understanding and achievement in the content standards and progress indicators for language arts literacy.

The activities serve as suggestions. They are meant to be adapted to students' instructional needs. We need to approach each suggested activity with the questions, "How can I use this activity with my students? What material am I already using that will lend itself to this activity? What else am I doing to develop student achievement in this indicator?" By using this decision-making process, we make these activities our own.

Each activity is preceded by the letter **(E)**, **(M)**, or **(S)**. These letters correspond to the progress indicator designations: (E) Elementary grades K–4; (M) Middle School grades 5–8; and (S) Secondary level grades 9–12. Although these letters suggest specific instructional levels, the activities themselves may be used with modifications at other levels.

WRITING

STANDARD 3.3 ALL STUDENTS WILL WRITE IN CLEAR, CONCISE, ORGANIZED LANGUAGE THAT VARIES IN CONTENT AND FORM FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES AND PURPOSES.

Descriptive Statement: Writing is a complex process that may be used for self or others in communication, expression, and learning. Proficient writers have a repertoire of strategies that enables them to vary forms, style, and conventions in order to write for different audiences, contexts, and purposes.

Writing activities should include opportunities for students to think about their ideas and feelings and the events and people in their lives. Through writing, students are able to describe experiences, examine and organize their perceptions of them, and link them to events and experiences in the lives of others. Students should be helped to understand the recursive nature and shifting perspectives of the writing process, and should be encouraged to take risks, collaborate, and reflect as they compose increasingly complex texts. Students should be taught strategies that will assist them in writing clearly and in crafting their texts with appropriate conventions of spelling, grammar, and punctuation as they revise, edit, and publish. They should learn to examine their writing not only as a product but also as a mode of thinking. They should recognize that what they hear, speak, read, and view contributes to the content and quality of their writing. Writers need to be able to complete projects for a variety of purposes.

CUMULATIVE PROGRESS INDICATORS

1. Use speaking, listening, reading, and viewing to assist with writing.

- (E) Students are taught to “stretch” the word they want to write using all the sounds they hear in the word. The goal of this is to help young children record their ideas before they know how to use conventional spelling, and develop and demonstrate their phonological awareness and ability to isolate sounds in words. Children must say the word slowly and hear their own voices make sounds (feel the sounds in their mouths) in order to develop this awareness.
- (E) Following an oral reading where author techniques are discussed, students write to an author using a Language Experience Approach. Children make specific comments regarding the author’s style and characters.
- (E) Children take turns in the Author’s Chair where they read stories they have written. The classmates listen, and the children experience firsthand how an author feels reading his or her work to a responsive audience.
- (M) Students keep reading logs where they record their responses to books they have read during the year. The teacher guides the writing with thought questions, such as “Which character in the book might you select as a friend? Why?” or “What puzzles or bothers you most about the story?”
- (M) A fifth-grade social studies class is studying early discoverers and explorers. They have researched information on the Internet about such explorers as Columbus, Cortez, and Cabot. Each child selects a favorite explorer and writes a journal entry from that person’s point of view. The entry can be at the point of discovery or somewhere along the way.

- (M) A teacher wants her children to understand how an author can use detail to create a setting. She has them work in small groups to analyze the details in stories they have read, such as *Johnny Tremain*; *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; and *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. Then she asks the students to return to the creative pieces they are presently writing to refine their details.
- (M) Students develop and videotape their own television newscast. After viewing the news at home or in school, students discuss the elements of newscasts and the behind-the-scenes tasks of writing and producing the news. They then assume the different roles: anchor, writer, assignment editor, reporter, producer, director, and camera people. When students are ready, the finished newscast is videotaped and then critiqued.
- (S) An English teacher asks the students to look at introductions to each of several chapters in their history texts and to identify qualities of effective introductions. Small groups review the introductions to decide whether any of them could be improved. They brainstorm these qualities as a class, and the groups choose a chapter introduction to rewrite. Students then review pieces of writing in their portfolios to determine the effectiveness of the introductions to their own longer essays. Each student selects one or two of these to revise.
- (S) Students read a novel such as *Anna Karenina*. Afterwards, they view a filmed version of the novel. Following class discussion, each student writes a critical essay on some aspect of the story that is depicted differently in the film and the novel.
- (S) After reading and then viewing the film version of Stephen Crane's "The Blue Hotel," students research Naturalism, discuss and take notes on the movement, and write an essay as it applies to the written text and the degree to which the film adequately expresses Crane's naturalistic ideas.
- (S) In collaboration with the history/social studies department, students watch *The American Story* series in their English class as they learn about important topics in American history. After viewing one episode of the series, which features such locations as Jamestown, Valley Forge, and Williamsburg, students take notes on the physical characteristics of the featured site and write a short essay explaining how this place has affected and been affected by its role in our nation's history.



2. Write from experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

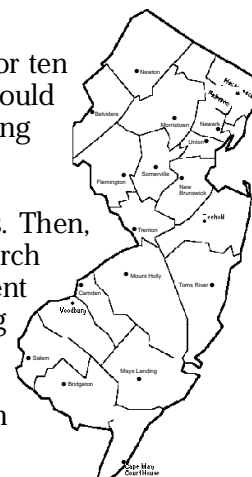
- (E) Each student is given a stuffed animal and a “writing suitcase.” Students take the animal home and use writing materials in the suitcase to write their overnight adventures.
- (E) A principal or teacher can arrange a monthly (or more frequent) “Pizza/Reading Session”, involving different students each time. Initially, one or two students from each 3rd and 4th grade get together with the principal to discuss books they are reading in and out of school. The principal can fine-tune the sessions to discuss commonly read books or to look more closely at literary concerns: the conventions of a genre, the point of view used in the book, characterization, realism, or other topics.
- (E) *Weekly Reader* offers to pair same-grade classes in different schools. This offer comes with a teacher’s guide in an October *Weekly Reader* issue. Classes practice writing friendly letters and exchange (with parental approval) at least two letters with pen pal classes. They also exchange audio- and videotapes. Students are encouraged to share information about their state’s history, geography, and famous people. They may share class news, interesting books they have read, and jokes or riddles.
- (E) Children have been discussing different weather conditions. They explain some of their reasons for liking or disliking some conditions. While they talk, the teacher records on chart paper some words the children use in their oral language but may not know how to write, such as *temperature*, *comfortable*, and *sleigh*. The children are then directed to write a few sentences about either their favorite or least favorite weather condition, referring to words on the chart for spelling help.
- (M) After a class discussion of qualities to look for in a friend, students write a descriptive essay about a best friend, human or animal. They include some of the following topics: how they met their best friend, characteristics of a friend, and what they and their best friend do and do not expect from each other. Points should be illustrated by specific examples, reactions, and feelings.
- (M) A teacher tells the children that she is sad because her best friend is moving to another state. She tells the class that she wants to write her friend a letter about this and hopes the class will help. The teacher uses a transparency to compose the letter with the class. As they work, the teacher discusses such letter-writing conventions as the salutation, closing, and proper form. Then, each child is encouraged to write a letter to a friend.
- (M) After reading Robert Lipsyte’s *One-Fat Summer*, a story in which the main character appears to have no positive male role models, an eighth-grade class discusses some men whom this character would benefit from knowing. The students consider celebrities as well as people they know personally. Then each one writes a persuasive essay arguing why the main character would benefit from knowing this specific role model.
- (S) Students keep a weekly class journal on the computer. Each week, one student records the major events that have taken place in the classroom, as well as personal and/or class observations, feelings, and ideas. Because this notebook is kept on a computer, students also have the opportunity to download digital pictures they have taken during the week and to include them in the journal.
- (S) After reading and discussing the chapter on “Childhood Memories” in Ken Macrorie’s text, *Writing to Be Read*, students write a first-person expository essay about a significant childhood experience recounted through personal thoughts and feelings.



- (S) Reflecting on a quarter's, semester's, or year's work in an art, world cultures, or English class, students compose personal "experience books" to chronicle significant experiences, thoughts, and feelings through words, photographs, and other visual artifacts.

3. Use writing to extend experience.

- (E) In an integrated mathematics and language arts unit, primary-grade students study a particular tree. After talking about the relative height of the tree and general width of the tree's trunk, they measure the tree and examine the changing nature of the leaves. They record their observations in a class notebook and update their information periodically throughout the year.
- (E) Students conduct an experiment to replicate the surface of Mars. Putting steel wool in a box of sand, they spray the steel wool daily with water. In their learning logs, they record the changes in the surface color of the steel wool. After two weeks, they examine their entries and write a summary speculating on the source of the red color of Mars.
- (E) After a read-aloud of Naylor's *Shiloh*, students are asked to think about how Marty chooses to solve his problems in the story. They share their ideas in small groups and then write journal entries detailing how they might have chosen different solutions to Marty's dilemmas.
- (M) Students rewrite the ending to a popular short story with an ironic ending (e.g., "The Lady or the Tiger," "The Gift of the Magi," and "The Monkey's Paw").
- (M) Students and their teacher keep a dialogue notebook in which students construct and record their experiences, thoughts, and feelings pertaining to a text (e.g., literary work, visual text, or auditory recordings) they are studying.
- (M) After listening to a teacher read-aloud, students are asked to write for ten minutes in response to the prompt: "If I were (character name), I would have...." Afterwards, students comment on how the process of writing led them to consider thoughts and feelings that were new to them.
- (M) Students learn the names and locations of New Jersey's 21 counties. Then, by lottery, each student selects a county to research. Students research the name of the county seat and the zip code for county government mail and then write a business letter to the County Clerk requesting demographic information. If the class number exceeds 21, students may write to the NJ Division of Travel and Tourism in Trenton or to the Chamber of Commerce of Trenton or another large city, such as Paterson, Burlington, or Cape May.
- (M) Poetry helps students remember main ideas or key concepts in science. Students research a specific topic in science or social studies. For example, while studying the periodic table of elements, students research one of the elements, such as zinc or oxygen. Key words, such as the color of the element or the fact that an element is odorless, can be used as the basis for writing a poem. Poems from the anthology *Jar of Tiny Stars* by Beatrice Cullinan can serve as models.
- (S) Students use a double-entry notebook (2 columns) to record significant sections of the text as well as their observations, ideas, questions, associations, and feelings. After reviewing reading logs, students write a reflective paper about themselves as readers.



- (S) After reading John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, students are asked to imagine that one of the main characters, Lennie, is caught and brought to trial. The students then write a scene for this trial. Roles to include in their play are prosecutor, defense lawyer, judge, and witnesses. Students compare the outcomes of their trial scenes, and the plays are performed.
- (S) After reading a first-person narrative, each student rewrites the narrative using the first-person point of view of another character in the same short story. Students then analyze how the narratives change depending upon point of view.

4. Write for a variety of purposes, such as to persuade, enjoy, entertain, learn, inform, record, respond to reading, and solve problems.

- (E) The United States Post Office has a program entitled "Wee Deliver." The Post Office provides an introductory videotape and cardboard mailbox. Teachers and students in each classroom decide upon a street name for their room, and each student is assigned a numerical address. The school office creates a directory for the school. Copies of that directory and "postage" are placed in each room. Students write letters to other members of the school community. Students take turns serving as postmaster and letter carriers. They deliver only those letters that contain the proper address, return address, and simulated postage.
- (E) For National Education Week, students write a letter to a former teacher sharing some special memory of being in that teacher's class. Some students may thank their teacher for special help or recall a favorite event.
- (E) Newspaper in Education Week, an important part of the school curriculum, can be used in a variety of ways: (1) Student reporters write articles about classroom projects and activities and submit their stories for publication in a class or school newspaper or for display on a classroom news board. (2) Students study editorial pages and then write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper stating an opinion, expressing a concern, etc.
- (M) In math class, students use writing to help them think through their solutions, especially when they are "stuck" on a problem. For example, before giving up on a difficult math task, students write down what their thoughts are and what they are trying to do. This metacognitive activity can help students clarify their thinking in any of the content areas.
- (M) Students use their double-entry math journal to reinforce the notion of writing to learn. The left-hand column of the journal contains notes and problems, the right-hand column a summary of their ideas and responses over a period of several weeks. Students exchange journals with a partner and comment on the clarity of their partner's right-hand column.
- (M) Students pretend that a community member has asked each of them to identify five items that are representative of their community. The items are to be placed in a time capsule that will be opened in the year 3000. Students identify the items and write a letter to the people living in the year 3000 describing how each item was used and why each was important to the students.
- (S) Using a given format for writing a literary essay, each student generates a thesis statement and writes an essay incorporating appropriate textual citations and other elements required for the literary essay structure.

- (S) Students end each class period with a five-minute writing to answer the following questions: (1) What was most important in today's learning? (2) What was most confusing in today's learning? Their teacher uses the writing to determine what the students have learned, whether they can identify the critical ideas of the lesson, and what information requires further clarification in the next class session.
- (S) Students browse through art books for the purpose of selecting a work of art that depicts or reflects a short story, poem, play, or novel they have studied. The students then write a one-page exposition explaining the aesthetic relationship of the artwork to the piece of literature read.

5. Write on self-selected topics in a variety of literary forms.

- (E) After reading *James and the Giant Peach*, students create their own adventure story in the style of Roald Dahl. During revision, students work on two skills: sequence of events and paragraphing for each new speaker in a dialogue.
- (E) Students engage in daily writing workshops. In their writing folder or notebook, they keep a list of possible writing topics. This list, as well as their classroom experience with a variety of literary forms, guides them to select both a topic and a format for the pieces they elect to write during writing workshops each day.
- (E) As part of science instruction, students are asked to write a report on a specific topic. They are required to follow a particular format that is modeled and explained by the teacher. The teacher also provides examples of completed reports for students to examine.
- (M) Students write original epitaphs for themselves, using Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* samples as catalysts for their own writing.
- (M) Before a teacher has her students write biographies of living people, the class discusses the types of things they have learned about the people whose biographies they had read for their recent book reports. They might mention such things as a person's family life, friends, hobbies, role models, education, and dreams. Each student then researches a living person and writes that person's biography.
- (M) Following a teacher read-aloud of Cynthia Rylant's *When I Was Young in the Mountains*, students discuss their own memories of growing up. Then, students write a poem or paragraph expressing memories of their childhood experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Their writing will include Rylant's words "When I was young..." in the first sentence. Students share their writing with classmates and discuss advantages and disadvantages of using a story starter to facilitate writing.
- (S) After reading a work of literature written in a distinctive style, for example, the style of Faulkner, Hemingway, or Woolf, students select a person or place to describe in the style of that writer.
- (S) Students develop a writer's notebook in which they record observations, thoughts, feelings, dialogues, and/or internal monologues. After students have recorded for several days, they create a "best quotes" page by extracting quotations from their own work. This page of best quotes serves as a source for writing an autobiographical sketch.
- (S) In conjunction with a poetry unit, students write original sonnets using either the Elizabethan or Italian structure as a guide for composition. Samples are bound together to create a class collection.

6. Write collaboratively and independently.

- (E) Students take turns composing sentences for a class story. The teacher and the class ensure that the story line is maintained.
- (E) After reading a novel, students working in cooperative groups discuss ways to change the ending of a story. Once each group agrees to an ending, the students work together to write the new ending.
- (E) Students write independently each day during Writer's Workshop. That writing is shared with classmates and the teacher during peer and teacher conferences. The writer then considers suggestions and feedback as s/he revises and/or edits the writing.
- (M) After reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo*, students compare and contrast the two girls' experiences. Working in pairs, students then create a Venn diagram to chart the similarities and differences. This information is used as a basis for writing a poem, book review, or personal essay.
- (M) After children have seen the performance of several popular folktales, they work in groups to write their own play about another folktale they know. The teacher leads each group in a discussion of dialogue and its preeminent role in a play. They discuss how to make the dialogue true to the character, and how dialect sometimes helps with this. After they write their plays, the groups perform them for others to see, hear, and appreciate.
- (M) After reading short stories containing irony, such as "The Necklace," "The Lottery," or "A Dip in the Pool," the teacher divides the class into small writing groups. Each group develops its own short story using the same genre. Once the groups have developed their drafts, groups conference with each other to give feedback and suggestions for revisions. Final copies of the stories are published in a class anthology that is donated to the school library.
- (S) For a unit on "Creating a Utopia," students work in groups to identify what the group considers utopian characteristics for one of the following areas: government, economics, civic responsibility, culture, and education. Each group appoints someone to record ideas during small-group discussions. Then the whole class reconvenes to discuss, refine, and agree upon the underlying ideas for their utopia. Finally, they collaboratively compose a preamble for their governing constitution.
- (S) For a collaborative interpretation of literature, the teacher sets the stage by first discussing the major characteristics of a particular genre and assigning a literary selection to be read, such as Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants." Working in small groups, the students devise collective answers, supported by text, to two general questions, such as (1) What is the theme of the story? and (2) What is the significance of the title? Using their answers to these questions, each group collaboratively composes a brief essay that they present to the class.
- (S) Students work collaboratively to construct an extended definition essay. Focal prewriting activities include the following: (1) narrowing and selecting the term/idea to be defined (e.g., hero, romanticism, or freedom); (2) examining the essential elements of definitions; and (3) researching the term/idea selected. Working through these steps, groups collaborate to construct an essay.

- (S) Students look at teacher-provided, untitled photographs from newspapers and magazines. Working collaboratively, students use these photos as the basis for writing a news story that answers the questions: Who? What? Where? When? and Why? Afterwards, students compare their stories with the captions that originally accompanied the news photographs and consider the function of photojournalism in communicating information effectively and efficiently.

7. Use a variety of strategies and activities, such as brainstorming, listing, discussion, drawing, role-playing, notetaking, and journal writing, for finding and developing ideas about which to write.

- (E) Students draw a floor plan of the first home they remember. (The teacher models the task on the board or an overhead transparency.) After delineating rooms, students add rudimentary shapes to indicate furniture and appliances. Students may add pets and other distinguishing items, such as landmarks outside the home. The floor plan provides visual prewriting. Students envision a time they were in one of the rooms (or outside) and “replay” their memory. This becomes a catalyst for writing “Before I Started School....”
- (E) Students meet in pairs to share funny or enjoyable experiences that occurred in school. Student A relates the activity while Student B listens. When Student A finishes, Student B relates his or her own experience. Students may ask questions of each other to clarify the experiences but may not take notes. After both have finished speaking, the students separate and write their stories based on the experiences they related. When both finish writing, they take turns reading the accounts aloud. The teacher can lead students to examine the differences between talking and writing about experiences.
- (E) The teacher models a topic selection process at the overhead projector. She divides the transparency into four quarters and talks about each of four topics she might write about. As she talks, she jots down her ideas. When she finishes, she asks the students which of the four topics they think she should choose first. After discussing the reasons for the students’ choices, she shares her choice and her reasons for that choice. Then, she directs the students to fold a sheet of paper into four squares, open it out, and talk with a partner jotting down ideas for four topics, just as she did. At the end of fifteen minutes, all students should have at least one topic to write about.
- (M) Students create a timeline or life map to trace a fictional character’s life. They then discuss how the character changed over time and what experiences contributed to those changes.
- (M) Students brainstorm to compile a word bank of time-sequence words that signal transition and indicate sequence, for example, *first*, *next*, *then*, *finally*, and *after*. The class then selects some words and uses them to write a class paragraph that describes how to do something they could do in the classroom. The teacher reads the directions aloud, and small groups perform the task.
- (M) The teacher models recalling her literacy development by writing on an overhead transparency her earliest, most salient literacy memories. She models reviewing her experiences in chunks: Pre-K, K–1, 2–3, and so on. She then asks students to outline their own literacy development to identify topics for writing.
- (S) Students create a semantic web to explore their views on a topic, such as global warming, prior to writing a persuasive essay.

- (S) For one week, students keep a “day book” in which they jot down memorable snatches of dialogue, images, and scenes observed so that they develop a storehouse of ideas for writing topics.
- (S) Students bring magazines to class to use as a resource for visual ideas. Students then search for illustrations that intrigue them and motivate them to write.

8. Write to synthesize information from multiple sources.

- (E) Students use the Inquiry Chart (I-Chart) strategy described by Hoffman in *Language Arts* (1992) to organize notes from multiple sources in preparation for their writing.
- (E) In a unit on weather, the teacher provides several resources of weather information, such as *USA Today*, a taped weather forecast for the same day, and the *Farmers Almanac*. She models on a transparency how to take information from each of these sources and transfer the information to a chart. She talks through the process of synthesizing the information and creating a new weather report for that day. Then, she asks students to work in pairs to develop a weather report for another day.
- (E) The teacher models using a Venn diagram to compare and contrast several distinct versions of a fairy tale. Students use the information from the diagram to write a report comparing stories they have read.
- (M) After reading information from several different sources (both print and nonprint), students summarize or paraphrase common themes and explain how these were developed in the works they read.
- (M) Following the reading of a short novel, such as *Wanted...MudBlossom* by Betsy Byers or *The Real Thief* by William Steig, students use the format (play, trial transcript, etc.) within the text to develop a new, fair trial for the character. Students can also refer to reference books on trials or mock trials, as well as incorporate language used in all criminal trial situations.
- (M) Students view an infomercial and a news magazine or interview program. Afterwards, the class discusses the similarities and differences in the ways each form presents information, the “factual” content of the infomercial, and the potential manipulation of the viewer. Students also consider how to discern the difference, that is, how to tell when a product is being sold or merely explained. Students then write an essay comparing and contrasting the two sources of information.
- (S) After reading a novel such as Michael Crichton’s *The Andromeda Strain*, students participate in cross-curricular science workshops on topics such as the origins of life, viruses, and exploration of Mars in search of life forms, prior to writing about the novel.
- (S) While conferencing with students regarding drafts of their persuasive writing, teachers direct them to reference materials that ordinarily do not require documentation (e.g., almanacs and atlases), which students can use as resources for statistics and other specific details during revision.
- (S) After reading a novel such as Dashiell Hammett’s *The Maltese Falcon*, students draft essays about the novel. Then they view the film and read reviews—both film and book—with an eye to integrating this additional information during revision of the essays.

9. Use figurative language, such as simile, metaphor, and analogies, to expand meaning.

- (E) Students complete the sentence “Freedom is...” with something they can draw. After writing the sentence and drawing the picture, students use the drawing to revise the sentence. They look carefully at the picture, selecting details they did not include in their first writing. They then write these details after their original sentence.
- (E) Students write and illustrate their own examples of figurative language as they learn them. For example, they might write the phrase “Time is money,” and then illustrate the meaning on construction paper for display in the classroom.
- (E) The teacher writes on the board a simile found in the day’s read-aloud: “The snow fell like a cloak around us.” Teacher and students discuss the simile and record it with a definition in their notebooks. Students are then directed to look for similes in a book they read during silent reading. Afterwards, students record similes they have found and display their records on the classroom wall.
- (M) Students write a parody of a short poem that uses imagery, following the style of a poet whose work they have read.
- (M) In a study of characters in Cynthia Rylant’s novel, *Missing May*, students use the structure of simile in order to generate knowledge about the characters: Summer is like _____. Ob is like _____. May is like _____. Cletus is like _____.
- (M) In partner revision conferences, students identify spots in their writing in which the writer has told rather than shown. (For example, “The teacher was beautiful that day.”) They practice writing similes, metaphors, or analogies that might bring visual specificity and higher interest to their piece than does their original sentence. This activity is done with the teacher coaching students to find, change, and share sentences.
- (S) After reading Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, students discuss the interplay of poetry and prose in the book. They locate phrases they consider poetic and discuss how these contribute to the overall effect of the work. The teacher reinforces concepts of simile, metaphor, and symbolism. The students then turn to their own writing to see where they can use similar devices.
- (S) After studying the sonnet or some other poetic form, students create their own poems, using the poet’s form and type of figurative language as models for their own compositions.
- (S) To help students incorporate more figurative language in descriptive essays, the teacher shares examples from works by such professional writers as Dickens, Hurston, and Marquez. As the class reads the examples aloud, students point out words and phrases that help them visualize the scene described. They list the figurative language on the board. Next, students group the words and phrases by category: imagery, simile, metaphor, analogy. Students then return to their own descriptive essays to identify sections where they could add figurative language. Finally, they revise their writing using imagery, similes, metaphors, and analogies.



- [illegible]

Students skip a line to represent the beginning of each new paragraph. When the graph is completed, students get a visual representation of their writing. If their bar graph looks like a box, their writing may lack sentence variety. They should investigate ways of varying sentence length, such as sentence combining and sentence division.

- (M) After students complete first drafts of a composition or essay, they share their compositions with partners. Student A reads his/her composition to Student B and then asks two questions of Student B: (1) What did you hear? and (2) What would you still like to know? Then the two students reverse roles.
- (M) Students watch *Legends from Many Lands* aired on NJN to become familiar with multicultural fables, legends, and fairy tales from around the world. Students then engage in class discussion of the major issues covered in each segment, as well as the form of storytelling and the cultural differences each legend explores. Then, after re-viewing one legend, students write a short essay detailing their perceptions of the story and their reactions to the ending.
- (S) As a means of exploring audience and voice, students write quickly for two to three minutes on a given topic, such as recycling, from several points of view: a third grader telling his parents about the new recycling program in the lunchroom; an environmentalist writing a persuasive pamphlet on the need for stricter recycling laws; a memo to employees from the CEO of a corporation being investigated for indiscriminate disposal practices. Students exchange their writings with a partner and examine the shift in content, form, and language from one piece to the next. Following this, they evaluate their own writing for sense of audience and voice.

- (S) Students write a narrative about an experience they have had, using a universal theme from a story they have read. Later, they return to the story to find details that would support their writing and use these as the basis for adding content to their own narrative.
- (S) Students compare their experiences writing in a traditional medium, such as pen and paper, with their experiences writing with the computer. In discussion, they consider the following questions: How does the computer influence drafting, revising, and editing? Do they find greater freedom to express themselves in one mode or the other? Do they revise and edit more in one mode?

11. Edit writing for developmentally appropriate syntax, spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation.

- (E) Students are taught to edit their writing for spelling by starting with the last word on the page and looking carefully in turn at each word to determine whether it looks right. They are taught to use a variety of resources and strategies to correct their own misspellings. They know that their teacher will not correct their spelling without evidence on the paper (such as circling the word) that they have made independent attempts to identify and correct misspellings.
- (E) The teacher creates an editorial board of four to five students who have a strong grasp of written conventions. All students submit papers to the board prior to publication. During the year, class members will take turns serving on the board. Previous board members are responsible for training each new member.
- (E) Students edit their own rough drafts for spelling errors by using a method such as the “Have-a-Go” sheets. First they are to find a misspelled word, circle it, and look at it carefully one letter at a time. Then students “have-a-go” by writing the word again above the first attempt. In conferences with the teacher, they discuss the changes in their spelling. Their explanations include spelling rules or other known words that share spelling patterns.
- (E) Each child traces, cuts out, and decorates (using a pattern) an 18-inch basket. Egg shapes are cut out of white construction paper. As the teacher says a spelling word, each child writes the word on a blank egg. If the word is spelled correctly, the child decorates the egg and places it in the basket. The teacher works individually with students so they will all end up with a basket of eggs.
- (E) In order to illustrate how writers use paragraphs, a teacher provides models for her children. She chooses two books, *Koala Lou* and *What Do You Do With a Kangaroo*, which are books the children know well and which have repeated patterns. After the children review these models, they look at their writing to see where paragraphing can occur.
- (M) In this middle school classroom, students have been grouped into different clubs. One club is an editing club. The students take turns participating in this club, meeting with their teacher during class once a week to edit their classmates’ writing and their own texts. In this manner, the teacher is able to provide direct instruction to a small group of students who are quite focused on the task. The texts the students are editing have already been selected for classroom publication. Students use various resources, such as *Write Source 2000*, *Warriners Complete Course*, class-constructed checklists, and editing questions.
- (M) Students self-edit and peer edit writing drafts, checking for subject-verb agreement, word usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

- (M) The teacher selects an excerpt from a favorite children's book containing complex and varied punctuation. She makes two transparencies, one retaining the original punctuation and the other devoid of any punctuation. She asks a volunteer to give a cold reading of the unpunctuated revision to demonstrate the importance of punctuation. Then, the class dictates the correct punctuation to the teacher, who adds it to the unpunctuated excerpt. Afterwards, the teacher superimposes the original version on top of the class edition so students can see how closely their punctuation matches the original.
- (S) Students edit written pieces for their portfolios. They are encouraged to read their works aloud exactly as they are written, including punctuation. The oral reading should help them identify difficulties, such as improper subject-verb agreement, fragments, and omitted words.
- (S) Once each week, the instructor chooses one sentence that illustrates one or more editing issues from grade-appropriate reading. First, she reads the sentence aloud while students listen. Next, she reads the sentence more slowly, dictating in a manner that allows students to write out what they hear. After she reads the sentence for a third time, the students take turns telling her how to write the sentence, voicing aloud issues of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Finally, the group discusses both the correctness of the sentence as it is written and possible stylistic variations.
- (S) Using sentence composition items from an SAT practice book, students study how grammatical issues, such as transitions and appositives, cue readers toward correct answers. They then look at a piece of their own writing to determine where such constructions might be useful.

12. Publish writing in a variety of formats.

- (E) Students create a class anthology using selections from their portfolios. Working with the art and graphic arts departments, students collaborate to design a cover and layout for their publication.
- (E) A fourth-grade class reads Byrd Baylor's free verse poem, "I'm in charge of celebrations". They respond by creating their own celebrations of nature, which they write on paper strips and illustrate. These strips are sorted by month and collected into a flip-book calendar of celebrations. The class enjoys referring to the calendar and celebrating their own special days all year long.
- (E) Once students have published, they create a copy of their publication for the school library and include a dust jacket biography for the back cover. The librarian files each book and creates a library card pouch or bar-code for borrowing that book.
- (E) Students participate in a schoolwide Young Author's Fair promoted by the PTO. Children have submitted their best or favorite work as entries. Competitive awards are not given, but every child who contributes an original work in bound-book form receives a certificate of participation.
- (M) Students in school where the technology is available can use e-mail to correspond with pen pals who are education majors at college. The elementary and college students agree to read the same book and then discuss it as part of their e-mail correspondence.

- (M) A teacher organizes a student newspaper at any grade level. Microsoft offers a “Page Wizard” that helps students format a newspaper, including headlines, columns, and page numbers. Once the newspaper is created and saved, students throughout the school can submit articles, poems, revisions, and question-and-answer columns for publication. After introductory sessions, students type the submissions into the template and print the paper.
- (M) Students create an advertisement to sell a new cereal. Their campaign includes designing the container, identifying catchy words, and providing relevant nutritional information.
- (M) To demonstrate understanding of a narrative, students create a script from the narrative text. Students work cooperatively to write a dialogue, rehearse it, and read it to the class. Props may be used.
- (S) Students keep a record of their publications in their writing folder. This includes a list of what pieces of writing they have completed and how these pieces were published. Forms of publication include reading to the class; posting the work on a bulletin board; submitting it to a journal, magazine, or newspaper; and sending it to an outside reader.
- (S) Students use a desktop publishing program, such as *PageMaker*, to create a newsletter based on the ideas and characters in a book of their choice or a book being studied.
- (S) Teachers work together to keep students informed about writing contests. They maintain a centrally located “Writer-at-Large” bulletin board where notices of contests are posted, along with records of student entries and accomplishments.
- (S) Senior English classes take turns writing a monthly column about the senior class to include in the school bulletin that is sent home to parents. These columns can include academic and personal accomplishments as well as information about senior class events. When each English class takes its turn writing the column, it reviews the previous months’ columns as models for content and style.

13. Establish and use criteria for self and group evaluation of written products.

- (E) In groups, students read individual literature responses they have written to *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Each group's task is to select one response that will serve as a vehicle for discussion. Afterwards, the whole class discusses the criteria they used to make their selections. These criteria are written on chart paper by the teacher so the children can refer to the chart when they compose pieces later.
- (E) Children make a checklist of things they have to think about when they write, such as spelling, vocabulary, and staying on a topic. Their checklist is kept in each child's portfolio and is also put on display in the room for easy reference.
- (E) The teacher leads the students in developing a list of characteristics of content/organization, sentence structure, usage, and mechanics for strong, developing, and weak papers. Students use this modified rubric to score and improve their own writing.
- (M) Students critique the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric. They discuss its use for their writing concerns and identify other criteria that would be useful for specific types of writing. They then modify the rubric to include issues specific to the piece they are in the process of writing. After using the rubric, students critique the revised version for its utility.
- (M) Students discuss different grading options, such as a letter grade, a check system, or written comments. Students decide how valuable each of these systems is for writing drafts and for final products. Together, they agree on the evaluation system they will use and the criteria for which a student will receive each grade.
- (M) Students and their teacher periodically review the criteria they have established regarding forms for their written products. They consider new writing skills they have developed, such as creating effective conclusions or applying rules for conventional usage and mechanics. Together, students then revise the evaluation form so as to include additional criteria for good writing.
- (S) Students critique the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric. They discuss its use for their writing concerns and identify other criteria that would be useful for specific types of writing. They construct their own rubric for pieces they are in the process of writing. They then use the revised rubric and critique it for its utility.
- (S) Students use a rubric to evaluate each other's work. After a piece is evaluated, the author of the work rewrites it, responding to the reviewer's critique as appropriate. The author submits the rewrite as well as an explanation of what was done as a direct response to the reviewer's comments.
- (S) On all tests and quizzes containing essay questions, the teacher provides a scoring guide as part of the question so that students learn to evaluate what is expected of them prior to writing their response.



14. Develop a portfolio or collection of writings.

- (E) Students review the contents of their writing portfolios to determine what they have learned as writers. Students report these indications of learning to their teacher, who records their statements on the inside of the portfolios. The teacher categorizes these statements to reflect revising and editing skill development. Then, during individual conferences, the student and teacher set new goals for future writing.
- (E) Students are given opportunities to reflect about their writing in their portfolio. As part of that activity, they complete the following statements: What I like about my writing is.... I use my imagination when I am writing by.... I think that other people like my writing because....
- (E) Students periodically review their portfolios with a peer. They notice how their writing has changed in terms of topics and writing skills since the last time they did this review. After the review, the students complete a Partner Suggestions form on which they indicate what their partner liked about their writing and any areas for improvement that were suggested.
- (M) The student keeps a personal journal of reading reactions, personal experiences, poems, essays, and other writing. From time to time, the teacher reads the journals and writes notes to the students. The students reply to the teacher's notes.
- (M) Students keep a checklist of reading and writing interests in their portfolios. They check off preferred topics and genres for their writing and reading. In periodic conferences, the student and teacher review the checklist, and the teacher suggests book titles that might interest the student and provide ideas for writing.
- (M) On back-to-school night and during parent-teacher conferences, parents review their children's portfolios. These parents write letters back to the children commenting on their portfolio and specific pieces they enjoyed.
- (S) Before the end of each marking period, teachers and students review writing portfolios together. The students consider how their writing has improved during the last marking period, set new goals for the next marking period, and identify writing interests they would like to pursue. During the review, teacher and students consider the preestablished criteria for evaluating the portfolio and discuss the extent to which the portfolio has met these criteria.
- (S) In anticipation of a job interview or college application requirements, students in their junior year select texts from their portfolios to revise for inclusion with their future job or college applications.
- (S) Students review their writing to find recurring themes. Then they write an essay in which they explain the personal significance of one of the themes. They use this essay to introduce a thematic section of their portfolios.

15. Understand that written communication can affect the behavior of others.

- (E) Students discuss different rules they have seen posted in their neighborhood and school and the effect of these rules on their behavior. Students then create posters depicting the generally acceptable rules for bicycle and traffic safety.
- (E) Students bring in from home birthday cards that they have saved. They share these with the class and discuss how each card made them feel. They then create a birthday card for someone at their home or school. After the cards are created, the students show them to each other and talk about how they hope the person will react to the card.
- (E) Students have written fairy tales that they now want to illustrate and publish. Each fairy tale needs to be typed. The children send letters to their parents requesting typing assistance. They hope some parents will volunteer in response to their letters.
- (E) A classroom library is being set up at the start of the school year. The teacher and the children create a set of rules for handling and borrowing books. These rules are prominently posted in the library area.
- (E) Students prepare to leave for the school's holiday break. One child will get to take the class pet home. Together, the class creates a set of rules for the care giver to follow.
- (M) Students select a variety of newspaper editorials and articles that might affect readers. Each student summarizes one article, identifies the person who might be affected, and explains the likely effect. Next, the student rewrites his or her summarized article to produce a different effect.
- (M) After reading the opinion column in the school or community newspaper, students write letters to the editor of the paper expressing their agreement or disagreement with the columnist's views.
- (M) Students evaluate magazine or newspaper advertisements, noting the propaganda devices used by the advertisers. Next, they use the names of these devices as category headings for a bulletin board display and place the ads in the appropriate category. Then they create a newspaper, radio, or television ad based on one of these techniques.
- (S) After having read Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, students meet in groups to develop and write closing arguments for either the defense or prosecution of Charles Darnay. Students then present their arguments to the class.
- (S) After reviewing the language and content of different types of contracts, such as those for charge accounts and apartment rentals, students create contracts between two fictional characters who are at odds with each other (e.g., King Lear, Regan, and Goneril). They then discuss how the outcome of the play would have been different if such a contract had been in effect.
- (S) Students use the library to research topics of personal interest and then express their viewpoints in persuasive letters to the editor of a local newspaper, editorials for the school newspaper, or letters to their senators or representatives.



16. Write technical materials, such as instructions for playing a game, that include specific details.

- (E) Students keep a record of weather conditions on a chart in their classroom. On a regular basis, they record such information as date, time checked, and weather conditions.
- (E) Each student works with his or her parents, neighbors, classmates, and teacher to prepare a clear, concise set of directions for walking from school to home.
- (E) Students draft, revise, and refine directions for using their classroom computer and/or other technology in the classroom. They check the effectiveness of their writing by asking novice users of the equipment to follow their directions. When students are satisfied that their directions are clear, concise, and accurate, they use a word-processing program to make easily read index-card signs to post near the equipment.
- (M) Students are preparing for a class trip to Great Adventure. The teacher invites children who have been there before to make suggestions to the class as to how to get the most out of the trip. The class prepares a "Guidebook for Enjoying Great Adventure." When they return from the trip, the students discuss the value of the book. Then, in groups, they create guidebooks on other topics, such as babysitting, team sports, and getting along with your brother or sister.
- (M) Working in small groups, students draw a map of a familiar place, such as the school, playground, or park. They write directions to accompany the map, describing how to proceed from one location to another. The groups exchange maps and directions and follow the directions to reach the destination. They then revise to clarify, as necessary, and return the directions and map to the authors.
- (M) In small groups, students design and create their own card or board game. They write directions for the game and then exchange games with another group. Students play the games and provide feedback on the clarity of the instructions.
- (S) Students review entries in the book, *The Way Things Work*. They then meet in small groups to develop ideas for an invention that would be useful to senior citizens, young children, or individuals with disabilities. They illustrate this invention and write an explanation of how it works, following the format of *The Way Things Work*.
- (S) Students prepare for Career Day at their school by making charts that identify some features of careers that interest them. On the chart, they include job titles, descriptions, training required, and responsibilities. They also look for jobs in newspaper ads and list these on the chart.
- (S) Each student identifies an area in which he or she is an expert, such as gourmet cooking or computer programming. The student selects one aspect of that area for which he or she will write directions. These might include making soufflés or creating a website.



17. Cite sources of information.

- (E) Students select a piece of writing to edit for spelling. They circle each word they suspect is misspelled and consult a variety of resources to check the spelling. As students make their corrections, they cite the source in the margin. Sources will include pictionaries, dictionaries, word boxes, word lists, word wall, previous papers, or peers. Students may abbreviate their sources (e.g., P = pictionary).
- (E) As part of a unit on bears, students research different varieties of bears, consulting several sources that include encyclopedias, the Internet, content area texts, nature magazines, and fiction. They then write a composition on a chosen bear and include a list of their resources.
- (E) During morning message time, students are encouraged to dictate their news to the teacher, who writes it on the board modeling conventions of spacing, punctuation, and usage. For each piece of news volunteered, she asks the student to give the source. Upon completion of this activity, the students copy the news to bring home to their parents.
- (M) Students conduct a biographical research project for which they find information on the personal life, career, and contributions of a noted person. In their final report, they must cite sources of information in proper bibliographical form. Afterwards, the students evaluate their sources in terms of usefulness, ease of access, completeness, and accuracy.
- (M) Students research a time period from a historical novel. They identify important figures, events, and social conditions to discuss in a written report. The report should include a bibliography.
- (M) In preparation for writing research papers about environmental concerns, students with common interests, such as acid rain or industrial pollution, are collaborating in small groups. Each person in the group is responsible for locating three references as sources of information. The teacher models how to create source cards, and students prepare source cards for each of their three references. Each group presents a 15-minute presentation in which the students share their findings and cite their sources.
- (S) A class is producing a newspaper for distribution at school. Students in one group are writing an article about the new school that is being proposed for their school district. Their sources include interviews with board of education members and with children who might attend the school, educators' opinions about the need for a new school, and budget data from the board's financial office. The article should distinguish between primary and secondary sources as well as facts and opinions.
- (S) Students in a 12th-grade class prepare data charts for authors they have read during the year. Across the top of the chart, they list classification labels for information about the authors' lives that they will research (e.g., life span, type of writing, literary works, common themes, and critics' responses). Along the left side of the chart, students list the authors. In each cell of the chart, students enter a summary of the information as well as the source title. On a separate page, they record complete bibliographic information.
- (S) After reading a historical novel, students prepare questions about the time period that they would like to research. They share their questions in a class discussion, and each student assumes responsibility for researching at least one question. When the students have completed their research, they report their findings and give citations for the sources of their information.

18. Write for real audiences and purposes, such as job applications, business letters, college applications, and memoranda.

- (E) Students plan a school event such as a talent show. They review models of writing associated with that particular event, including announcements, invitations, directions, and thank-you notes. They then create these types of texts for their events.
- (E) The class reviews all the living authors read this year and selects one to write to. The students brainstorm ideas they might share with the author while the teacher webs the ideas on the board. The class then composes a fan letter to the author. The teacher mails the letter, and everyone waits for the response.
- (E) In preparation for Back-to-School Night, pairs of students interview each other about their hobbies, interests, and pets. Each student then drafts a profile of his or her partner. The partner reads and offers feedback to the writer. After students finish revising and editing their writing, the profiles are displayed on the bulletin board along with Polaroid photographs of each child. Later, these biographies and photos are duplicated and bound into copies for each student in the class.
- (M) Using one of the books in Alexandra Day's *Good Dog, Carl* series, students write stories for K-1 students based on the implicit text conveyed in the pictures. The students then take their stories to primary classrooms where they share what they have written with beginning readers.
- (M) Students identify summer jobs they can do: dog walking, weeding, garage cleaning, and babysitting. In groups, they decide which jobs they want and what job qualifications they would need for those jobs. They then create ads which, with parental approval, they post in the town library and other places.
- (M) Students scan a variety of media sources (e.g., newscasts, national magazines, and local daily newspapers) to identify a controversial topic. After researching the topic, they write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper recommending a course of action for or suggesting a solution to the problem.
- (S) Secondary students read model college admission essays. Next, they identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of the selected essays, considering how persuasive, sincere, cogent, and well-written the sample texts are. In groups, students use this information to develop a final checklist they can use for their own writing. Using actual application prompts from colleges and universities, the students then draft a college essay that their teacher and peers review using the class-generated checklist.
- (S) The English and Spanish language teachers are working collaboratively on a communications project. They have arranged for students to communicate via the Internet with students who live in Argentina. The students correspond in their second language, exchanging information about their respective communities, schools, and friends.
- (S) Students read and respond to classified ads. They develop an appropriate résumé, fill out an application, and write a cover letter.



19. Write a research paper that synthesizes and cites data.

- (E) As part of a unit on New Jersey, students use a variety of resources made available by the teacher and library media specialist to research the cultural, social, and economic history of the state. At the conclusion of their research, they use their notes and their sources to plan a New Jersey Historical Festival for the end of the year.
- (E) As part of a unit on “Animals in Africa,” students divide into two teams to play a game, “Guess What We Are.” In each round, three team members provide three separate clues about a given animal. The clues are based on note cards made by students during their research of the animals. The other team has to synthesize the clues to identify the correct animal.
- (E) After completing a study of the food groups and their contributions to healthy bodies, students create a week-long school lunch menu that supplies all the nutrients for healthy eating.
- (M) After a class discussion of the features of news writing (e.g., 5Ws/H and the inverted pyramid), students locate newspaper stories that they analyze for use of these techniques. Then, students begin research for an article on a news event in the school or community. They collect background information on the event and obtain firsthand accounts through interviews with individuals connected to the event. Finally, they write their articles using direct quotations as well as background details. These articles are compiled into a newspaper format and distributed to the class for reading and discussion.
- (M) As part of a unit on Native American cultures, students working in small groups select one culture to research. They prepare written reports on the following: history; home and community organization; food and dress; customs, beliefs, traditions (historical and contemporary); geographical location (tracing movement); tools, weapons, and transportation; writers, poets, musicians, and artists (past and present); contemporary public figures (politics, sports, business). Student groups present their final written reports in an oral presentation that is informational but which may include visual and audio aids (posters, charts, models, illustrations); dramatizations reflecting some aspect of the culture studied; and original poetry about the selected culture.
- (M) Students investigate a topic of their own selection. They read to formulate a research question, gather information from various sources, and organize their findings. They then write a paper presenting their results and including citations.
- (S) After a unit on “Differences in Human Learning” (e.g., visual, verbal, musical, social, and kinesthetic), students form groups based on shared interests in one form of learning. Each group investigates and prepares a report on career options and requirements for its learning style, citing data and sources. Later, they hold a Career Forum during which each group makes a presentation of its findings.
- (S) Students gather data from news sources, buyers’ guides, and the Internet in order to discern the best sports car for the dollar. To sort the data obtained from these sources, students generate critical categories for evaluating the cars and selecting the best buy. They then write a report recommending the car, giving reasons for their selections, and citing their sources of information.
- (S) After exploring possible research topics, students use *PowerPoint* to outline a research proposal that will identify a tentative topic, a plan for investigation, intended resources, and a brief description of the anticipated final product.

